

NEWS ARTICLE

For: Monday, July 31, 2000

To: Pensacola News Journal

By: Mike Donahoe, County Extension Director

Santa Rosa County Extension Service

Telephone: 850/623-3868 or 939-1259, ext. 1360

34TH ANNUAL SANTA ROSA COUNTY FARM TOUR A SUCCESS

Agriculture plays a very important role in Santa Rosa County with gross receipts of over \$50 million. More than 73,000 acres are devoted to agriculture in the county. The largest crop produced is cotton with nearly 26,000 acres, followed by peanuts with 13,600 acres. On July 20, approximately 225 local citizens got a first-hand look at the county's agriculture by participating in the 34th Annual Santa Rosa County Farm Tour. One thing that stood out on the tour this year was how the current drought has severely affected local production. The goal of the tour over the years has been to promote agricultural awareness and increase understanding of the issues facing agricultural producers.

Each year the tour features a variety of agricultural enterprises. Tour stops this year included: a tour of the Milton Gardens at PJC/UF Milton Campus, a presentation on biotechnology in agriculture at Griswold Farms, an antique farm equipment display at the Gabbert Farm, a hay cutting and baling demonstration at Bill Jordan's farm, and a peanut harvesting demonstration at Holland Farms.

The highlight of the tour was recognition of the Henry Lowry family as "Outstanding Farm Family of the Year." Henry, his wife Janet, and their three-year-old daughter Krystal reside on Hazel Godwin Road near Jay. Henry has been farming for 19 years and currently farms approximately 450 acres where he produces cotton, peanuts, and soybeans. The Lowrys are leaders in our county's production of food and fiber. They strive to be good stewards of the land by employing practices such as conservation tillage, integrated pest management, and the latest in biotechnology.

The Farm Tour is conducted each year by the Santa Rosa Agricultural Committee. The committee is headed by the Extension Service and includes representatives of the Blackwater Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Farm Service Agency, Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club of Milton, Farm Credit of Northwest Florida, International Paper, and The University of Florida-West FL Research & Education Center.

The Farm Tour Committee would like to thank the following area businesses for helping sponsor the tour this year and making it a huge success: Agro Distribution, Air Products and Chemicals, AmSouth Bank of Florida, Bank of America, Buffalo Rock/Pepsi-Cola, Burkhead Gin Company, Farm Credit of Northwest Florida, First National Bank of

Florida, Golden Gin & Warehouse, Golden Peanut Company, Gulf Power Company, Holland Farms, International Paper, Jay Peanut Farmers Coop, Kiwanis Club of Milton, Kiwanis Club of Santa Rosa Sunrise, McKenzie Motors, Raymond Diamond Grocery, Regions Bank, Royster-Clark Farmmarket, Santa Rosa County Farm Bureau, T.R. Miller Mill Company, and United Bank of Atmore.

Mike Donahoe is County Extension Director and Pest/Row Crops Agent for Santa Rosa County.